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## HEALTH OFFICIALS CONFIRM LOCAL CASE OF WHOOPING COUGH

*Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Diagnosed in Escambia County Teen*



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**Pensacola, Fla. –** The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia) has been notified that an adolescent resident of Escambia County has been diagnosed with pertussis. Pertussis, commonly known as “whooping cough,” is a vaccine-preventable illness, but can be highly contagious to non-vaccinated and under-vaccinated individuals. The disease is easily passed among individuals in close contact with one another. Pertussis can be especially dangerous to newborn infants who are too young to get vaccinated. This illness is also serious for people with weakened immune systems and for older adults.

- Pertussis is very contagious and is spread from person to person through the droplets from a cough. The main symptom is a cough that lasts for two weeks to several months. The cough can be very serious. Individuals may be unable to catch their breath and begin to turn blue. Severe coughs can also lead to vomiting, sleep loss, weight loss, nose bleeds, rib fractures, hernia and even pneumonia. In infants, the cough may have a “whoop” sound at the end.
- Individuals who have these symptoms, and those who have a cough and have been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with pertussis, should see a doctor.
- Everyone should talk with their physician about getting vaccinated. Individuals aged six weeks and older are eligible for the pertussis vaccine. The vaccine is available at FDOH-Escambia and from many private physicians.
- Previously-vaccinated persons may need a vaccine booster if there is going to be a newborn in their home, or they are going to be around older adults or individuals with poor immune function.

“Pertussis easily spreads within families and in other settings where there are close contacts among individuals, such as households, schools, and group child care situations,” said FDOH-Escambia’s Director, Dr. John Lanza. “In this situation the young person had been vaccinated against pertussis. On rare occasions, a fully-vaccinated person can present with symptoms.”

Individuals, particularly children and adolescents, in Escambia County, Florida who have not been vaccinated or who are experiencing a persistent cough should contact their primary health care professional for assessment.

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### About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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